

Minutes (unofficial)
Maryland Council for New Americans
Workforce Working Group
Friday, February 20, 2009, 9am
Marriott Corporate Headquarters, Bethesda, MD

1. Welcome and introductions

In attendance: Barbara Gradet, Kaori Hirakawa, Rachel Glass, Margaret Kim, Young-Chan Han, Elizabeth Chung, Ricardo Flores, Donna Kinerney, Amjad Riar, Matt Power, Irene Lee, Martin Ford, Karina Fortuny, Lily Qi, Melissa Froehlich, Linda Rabben, Karla Silvestre, Michael Fix, Michael Lin, Jimmie Walton Paschall, Andy Chavez, Adam Ortiz

2. Presentation by Marriott: Company integration efforts; public policy; and approach to immigration

Debbie Marriott welcomed group and explained history of company and its support of immigrant workers to the development of Marriott and our economy. Discussed that quality employee care leads to quality customer care, and that Marriott provides many opportunities for workforce training including ESL classes. Melissa Froehlich from the Government Relations office detailed their support for comprehensive immigration reform at the national level and their role in the "Essential Worker Coalition" of corporations that has been working to lobby Congress and highlighted CEO Chairman Bill Marriott's leadership on issue despite. Andy Chavez presented overviews of the company's "workforce effectiveness" and "retention education" programs including Leap Frog programming, particularly "Sed de Saber" ("thirst for knowledge"), a laptop-like package employees can take home for self study to help develop language skills.

3. Overview of immigrant workforce data

Michael Fix of the Migration Policy Institute presented highlights from the report "Uneven Progress: The Employment Pathways of Skilled Immigrants in the United States." Major findings include: 22% of college educated immigrants work in unskilled jobs, and another 22% are in semiskilled work. Public policy should focus on the highly skilled who are underemployed. In Maryland, African immigrants with a college education fare worse than national average for underemployment (41% of recently arrived in unskilled, 27% long term in unskilled, compared with 33% and 22% nationally). Policy implications suggest that we must work to compress the learning time for skilled immigrants through improved educational opportunities, naturalization, and credentialing.

4. What key areas for innovation and reform warrant our attention?

Items discussed include: Community colleges have existing assets that should be leveraged (Michael Lin). Stimulus that goes to workforce development should involve immigrant training and workforce development (Michael Fix). Career pathways should be a focus for immigrant training (Donna). An "Institute for New Americans" can be established at Community Colleges (Elizabeth). We should be cognizant of skilled persons in the wrong profession, mismatch (Lily). Good ideas should receive funding through the stimulus (Ricardo). We should be clear that there are different pathways for high skilled and low skilled workers (Irene). Many programs are not intensive enough, nor are as vocationally oriented as they should be (Linda). Credentialing and professional certifications have many unnecessary obstacles, especially in medicine (Amjad). Community organizations should be

organized/ utilized better in this effort, build capacity (Rachel). The public school system should also be leveraged, there is space and expertise to work with young people and parents (Young).

5. Plan and timeline for preparing our recommendations for final report (August 3, 2009)

Different approaches were suggested for moving ahead and structuring the report: assessment/ problem identification, best practices, and recommendations; division into needs for high and low skilled persons; examining the diverse infrastructure for workforce (employers, colleges, nonprofits, govt, one stop system). Group agreed to break into three groups: credential transfer, training and ESL, and attracting key workers. Each group would consider the differences between high and low skilled workers. Subgroups are listed at bottom.

6. Appointment of Chairperson

Dr. Amjad Riar was chosen to be Chairperson.

7. Other business

No other business.

8. Next meeting

Next meeting will be Wednesday, March 18, 3pm at the Annie E. Casey Foundation in Baltimore. Directions forthcoming.

Subgroups:

Credentialing	Training and ESL	Attracting Key workers
Margaret Kim Amjad Riar Linda Rabben	Barbara Gradet Kaori Hirakawa Rachel Glass Young-Chan Han Elizabeth Chung Ricardo Flores Donna Kinerney Irene Lee Stacy Rodgers Jimmie Paschall Karla Silvestre Michael Lin	Matt Power Michael Fix Karina Fortuny

From the Executive Order:

The Workforce Working Group will focus on helping to address the State's workforce shortage by examining credential transfer, training, and the attraction of key workers to create the region's most competitive workforce; examining the role of "One Stop" employment centers in streamlining the economic integration of new Americans; and identifying best practices that expedite English as a second language, both for children in the public school system and for working adults.